



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING




JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

THOMAS D. WATKINS, JR.
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

September 27, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Thomas D. Watkins Jr., Chairman


SUBJECT: Approval of Recommendations of the Joint Task Force on Creativity, Arts and Cultural Education

At the August 10, 2004, meeting of the State Board of Education, members of the Joint Task Force on Creativity, Arts, and Cultural Education presented the Executive Summary of its report titled:

**Creative Schools, Creative Minds...Cool Cities!
Mobilizing, Connecting, and Leveraging Michigan's
Arts and Cultural Resources to Impact Learning**

In preparing this Report, the Joint Task Force reached out to over 343 individuals involving over 120 persons in three public meetings and over 200 persons through a web survey. Higher education, PreK-12 teachers, arts and cultural institutions, libraries and museums were among those represented in the Task Force process.

The work of Michigan's Joint Task Force is timely, coinciding with Secretary Rod Paige's letter to superintendents noting that the arts are a core subject under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. Secretary Paige's letter offers guidance on the law's funding and flexibility and identifies ways in which the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* can be used to improve arts education and teacher quality, particularly as a means to improve the educational achievement of economically disadvantaged students through the arts.

Michigan's report, "Creative Schools, Creative Minds...Cool Cities!" was released as the National focus on the importance of the arts is increasing. Governor Mike Huckabee, of Arkansas, Chair of the Education Commission of the States, has identified arts education as the focus of the Commission's work for 2004 to 2006. "The research tells us what parents and education policymakers have known all along but haven't been able to prioritize on a national level," says Governor Huckabee. "The arts are critical, not only as a link to student productivity, but also as a key to a competitive workforce."

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

KATHLEEN N. STRAUS – PRESIDENT • HERBERT S. MOYER – VICE PRESIDENT
CAROLYN L. CURTIN – SECRETARY • JOHN C. AUSTIN – TREASURER
MARIANNE YARED MCGUIRE – NASBE DELEGATE • ELIZABETH W. BAUER
REGINALD M. TURNER • EILEEN LAPPIN WEISER

608 WEST ALLEGAN STREET • P.O. BOX 30008 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909
www.michigan.gov/mde • (517) 373-3324

Therefore, Michigan Department of Education staff recommends that the Joint Task Force on Creativity, Arts and Cultural Education:

- 1 Continue its work over the next eighteen months.
- 2 Restructure into Strategic Action Teams that will: involve broad representation of stakeholders; follow through on specific recommendations of the Report, with action plans that clearly specify responsibilities, timelines, and potential funding strategies.
- 3 Work with the Office of School Improvement in the Michigan Department of Education, and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, Department of History, Arts and Libraries to develop a coherent approach toward the use of research-based strategies to support creativity and learning in high priority school communities. The plan should:
 - a. align with the Michigan Department of Education, intermediate school districts, and local district school improvement strategies;
 - b. engage arts, business, cultural, and education partners in identifying and seeking funding to implement research-based programs supportive of creativity and learning.

Dr. William Anderson, Director of the Department of History, Arts and Libraries and I agree to jointly chair the Coordinating Council to ensure the work of the Joint Task Force is integrated and coordinated across state government in a synergistic, coherent fashion. We invite the continued direct involvement of State Board of Education members in the on-going work of the Joint Task Force on Creativity, Arts and Cultural Education.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the three recommendations of the work of the joint task force for the next 18 months as discussed in the Superintendent's memorandum dated September 27, 2004.